



The Time is Now
26th February 2017
'Inequality'
Nehemiah 5



Overview

Having dealt with external threats from Sanballat and Tobiah, Nehemiah's vision is again under threat - this time from within. Jewish nobles and officials are increasing their wealth by charging poorer Jews interest on money loaned to pay the King's tax. Nehemiah tackles this head on.



Getting to Know You

When you hear the word 'inequality', what comes to mind? And what feelings do you have about it?



Digging Deeper

Read Nehemiah 5 and quickly recap these questions with the person next to you:

- What kind of inequality is found in this passage?
- What happens as a result?
- How does Nehemiah counteract these?

Discuss Key Themes Together:

1. What does 'Fear of God' mean to you? Does it affect how you live? If so, in what ways?
2. What kinds of inequality do you see in Auckland? What could/should be done about it? Can churches play a role?
3. 'Injustice seldom feels like injustice to the person causing it'. Have you ever observed this? Or have you yourself 'lost your spiritual compass' along the line, and realised later how this affected others?
4. When we as Christians act poorly, it reflects badly on the church and Christian community. Nehemiah gets really frustrated when this happens. Why does it matter to him? Does it matter to us? Why?
5. Nehemiah is incredibly generous in this passage. Steve also told the story of the founder of Farmers - Robert Laidlaw, who liked to surprise people with anonymous acts of generosity. Do you know any other stories like that? What stops us all being like that?



Taking it home

- See if you can come up with an act of generosity you can do this week. Either collectively or individually.
- Choose an aspect of injustice/inequality to find out more about online.
- [Unrelated to the Nehemiah study:] HAVE YOU GOT A STORY ABOUT GOD'S AMAZING WORK IN YOUR LIFE THAT COULD BE WRITTEN UP? (Steve said he is looking for 10 God stories from our congregation by the end of march as a tester to see if we could make a 'Stories' book, similar to the one that St Paul's produced.) Please email Steve Worsley or Amy Williams if God is prompting you on this!



Prayer

'Nehemiah chapter 5 is no mistake. It challenges us to stand together as a community of people who worship God, not money. A community of generous Nehemiahs. One could only imagine what God could do with a church like that.'

Pray for it!!!